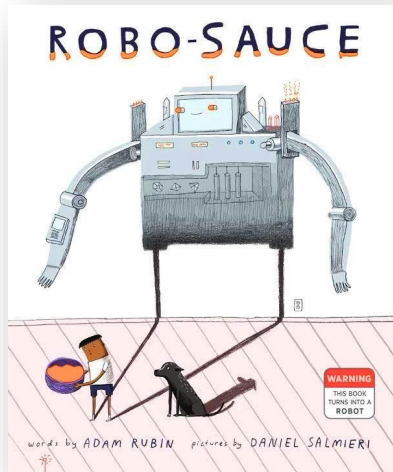


# Writing Trait: Organization ... the LEAD sentence Finding the ways in which writers begin their books

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## Before Reading

Before reading, have students look at the front cover illustration and combine it with the title to predict what this story might be about.

(If you don't have a copy of Robo-Sauce, don't worry. Any one of the books listed on the last 5 pages of this writing lesson will do! Or find an example of your own. It just needs to follow the secret trick! Keep reading to find out the secret!)

## During Reading

Pause during reading to listen to student comments which are often connections, questions, inferences and predictions. You might want to keep sort and keep track of their comments using this simple observation sheet (see next page).

## After Reading

After Reading, pause and reread the first sentence of this book. Explain that there is a **SECRET trick** that some writers know about when they choose the beginning sentences for their book. This trick is used to hook their reader and get them interested in reading on.

**But what is this trick?** Share just a couple more books that begin with a sound effect and/or a very short sentence. Often the two are intertwined. See if students can figure out the trick? (For other books, please see the pictorial list on the following pages.)

Once discovered, take them to the library at your school to see if they can find other examples of books that begin with a sound effect or a very short sentence. Explain to them that you need their help. You want to teach students about this clever trick used by some writers, but you need some more examples.

In the library, show students how to use a shelf marker to keep track of where they found their book. Once a book is chosen, students can pull it off the shelf, read the first sentence to see if it fits this secret trick, and bring the book to you if it does. Keep a list of the name of the book and the author's name.

This is a process-rich activity. You could easily find examples yourself, but when they find it for themselves, it's much more meaningful. When in doubt, **co-create** ideas with your students.

Name:

Recording Sheet ~ Observing & Listening


A ~ connection    B ~ question    C ~ inference    D ~ prediction

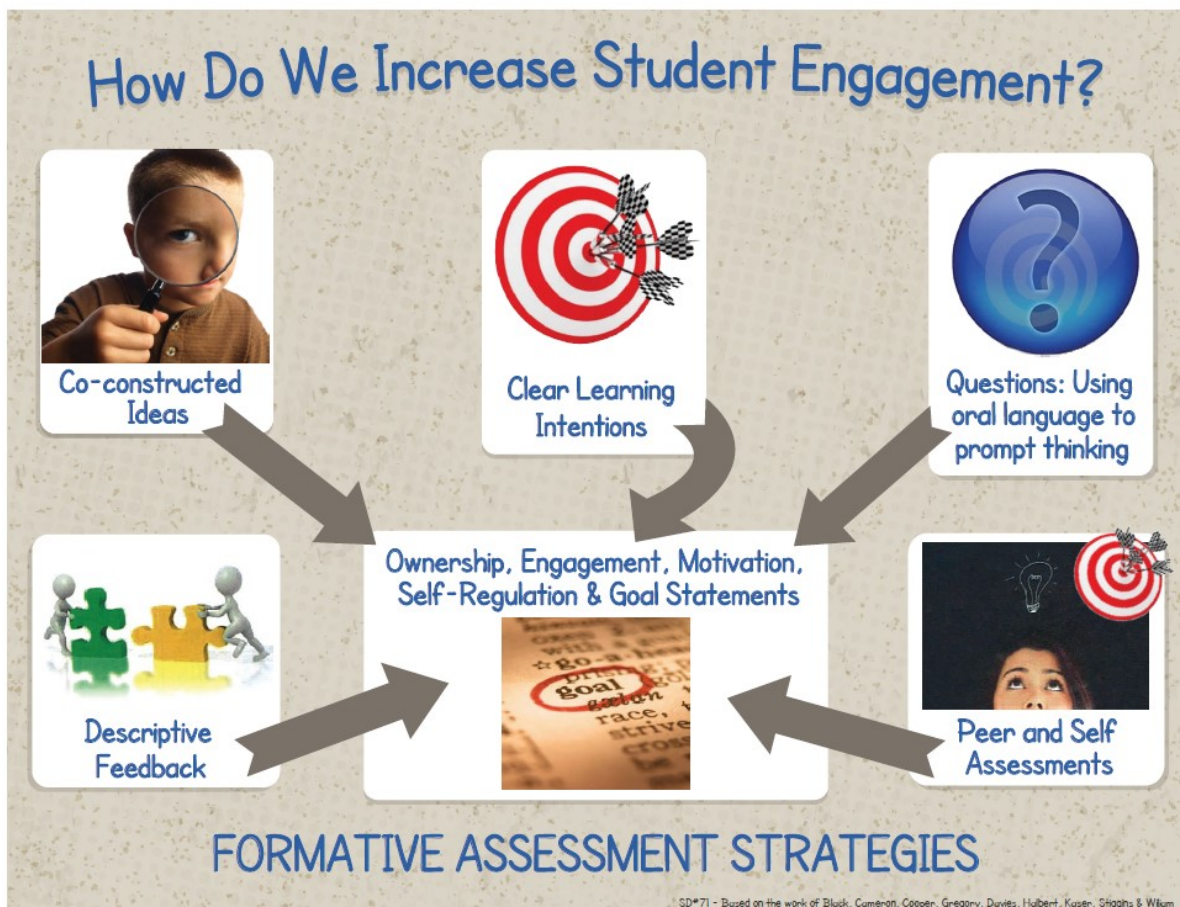
It may seem like such a simple idea to get students searching for a specific type of lead sentence, but watch them. Are they engaged? Are they on task? Are they finding their own examples?

Research clearly shows that when ideas are co-constructed, there is a higher degree of ownership, motivation, self-regulation, metacognition and students are better able to write meaningful, specific goal statements.

*(Black, Cameron, Cooper, Davies, Halbert, Kaser, Stiggins, & Wilam to name only a few!)*

*E.g. I can begin a piece of writing with a sound effect or a very short sentence.*

*During activities like this in which ideas are co-created, you become a facilitator of learning. How can teachers make sure they are not talking too much and telling their students what students could be learning themselves? These formative assessment strategies provide the answer.*





Walt

# We Are Learning to:

Find a secret trick some writers use to begin their book.



We can find a secret trick some writers use to begin their book.

## Hook your Reader with a Sound Effect or Very Short Sentence!

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Cover Picture	Author	Title
	Adam Rubin	Robo-Sauce
	Denys Cazet	Nothing At All
	Michael Ian Black	I'm Bored
	Mies Van Hout	Surprise
	Mies Van Hout	Happy

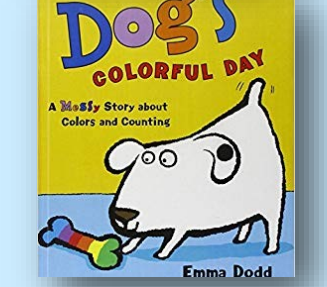
With thanks to Alysha Birnie's students for finding all these leads.

## Hook your Reader With a Sound Effect or Very Short Sentence!

Cover Picture	Author	Title
	Mo Willems	There's a Bird on Your Head
	Patricia C McKissack	Precious and the Boohag
	Sally Cook	Goodnight Pillow Fight
	Mo Willems	I'm a Frog
	Mo Willems	I Will Take a Nap

With thanks to Alysha Birnie's students for finding all these leads.

## Hook your Reader With a Sound Effect or Very Short Sentence!

Cover Picture	Author	Title
	<p>Alexandra Day &amp; Cooper Edens</p>	<p>Darby</p>
	<p>Ned Young</p>	<p>Zoomer</p>
	<p>Julie Andrews &amp; Emma Walton Hamilton</p>	<p>The Very Fairy Princess</p>
	<p>Clare De Marco and Melanie Sharp</p>	<p>Freddy's Teddy</p>
	<p>Emma Dodd</p>	<p>Dog's Colourful Day</p>

With thanks to Alysha Birnie's students for finding all these leads.



## Hook your Reader With a Sound Effect or Very Short Sentence!

Cover Picture	Author	Title
	Alyssa Satin Capucilli	Biscuit and the Baby
	Jennifer Dussling	Eek! Stories to Make you Shriek
	Jean Mazollo	I am a Leaf
	Susan Hood	Meet Trouble
	Jane O'Connor	Fancy Nancy Apples Galore

With thanks to Alysha Birnie's students for finding all these leads.

**Hook your Reader  
With a Sound Effect or Very Short Sentence!**

Cover Picture	Author	Title
	Grace Maccarone	Itchy, Itchy Chicken Pox
	Jane Kohuth	Ducks Go Vroom
	James Dean	Pete the Cat: Pete's Big Lunch
	Arlene Alda	Here a Face, There a Face

With thanks to Alysha Birnie's students for finding all these leads.

Hmmm. I wonder if there are other secret tricks that some writers know about when they are thinking about how to begin their writing?

Do some writers begin their writing with a question? What words signal a question? (create a chart ~ who, what, when where, how, why, if, do, can, should, would, could etc.)

Do some writers begin their writing with dialogue?

Do some writers begin their writing with a character description?

Do some writers begin their writing with something funny?

Do some writers begin their writing with something mysterious?

I think there may be other future trips to the library in order to hunt for more examples!

